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Identical letters dated 19 July 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to inform you of a bloody and brutal attack carried out by the French air force against defenceless Syrian civilians in the north of the Syrian Arab Republic on Tuesday 19 July 2016:

The French air force, illegally operating in the airspace of the Syrian Arab Republic as part of the so-called international coalition led by the United States of America, has carried out a bloody massacre near the Syrian-Turkish border that is a source of shame for all humanity. The peaceful village of Tukhan al-Kubra, on the northern outskirts of the city of Manbij, was heavily bombarded from the air, inhumanely killing entire families and razing homes.

The brutal French aggression killed more than 120 civilians, most of them women, children and elderly persons. It also wounded dozens of civilians, the majority of whom were women and children. On-the-ground reports indicate that the fate of dozens of other civilians, trapped under the rubble of their homes, is still unknown.

Only one day before, on Monday 18 July 2016, American warplanes perpetrated a similarly bloody massacre by heavily bombarding the Syrian city of Manbij, killing more than 20 civilians and inflicting wounds of varying levels of severity on dozens of others. Those victims were also mostly innocent women and children.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic denounces in the strongest possible terms the two bloody massacres carried out by French and American warplanes as part of the so-called international coalition led by the United States of America, which continues to drop its missiles and bombs on innocent civilians and Syrian infrastructure instead of on the terrorist gangs. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reminds the Governments of France and the United States that hypocrisy and double standards are not viable policy in the war against terrorism. Syria also emphasizes that anyone who is seriously intent on combating terrorism may do so only in coordination with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and its army, which is fighting terrorism all over Syria. Continuing to describe terrorist groups as the "moderate opposition" is disgraceful and unacceptable.

Terrorism has affected France because of its Government's ineptitude and lack of commitment to counter-terrorism. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms that France's response to terrorism must not in any way involve the killing of innocent Syrian civilians. France's moral and legal responsibility as a permanent member of the Security Council in no way allows it to violate the Charter of the United Nations and kill innocent civilians abroad. France should review its policies and fight terrorism on its own soil first. Syrian citizens have suffered enough from the actions of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which is supported either directly or indirectly by countries that are now well-known to the international community. Resolutions adopted by the Security Council, particularly resolution 2253 (2015), prohibit the financing and arming of terrorist groups and the provision of logistical and intelligence support to such groups. France has adopted such policy, and must bring it to an immediate end.

France, the United States of America, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Britain have persisted in providing various forms of support to terrorist organizations such as the Nusrah Front, the Army of Conquest, the Army of Islam, Liwa' al-Tawhid, the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion, the Badr Martyrs Brigade, the Emigrants Brigade and the Islamic Front, which they call moderate terrorist groups, as well as other groups belonging to or within the orbit of ISIL and Al-Qaida. This is stark evidence that those States, as well as others, are colluding with terrorist groups and are not serious about fighting terrorism. The fact of the matter is that terrorism will inevitably come back to haunt those who use it to harm others and change political regimes through terror and force. Terrorism has no religion, country or nationality.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic emphasizes that those massacres, crimes, havoc and destruction will not deter it from its duty of combating terrorism and bringing about a political solution to the crisis among Syrians, through Syrian-Syrian dialogue under Syrian leadership and without foreign interference. Those actions will bring an end to terrorism. The Syrian Government stresses that after approximately six years of war in Syria, anyone who refuses to support its efforts to eliminate terrorism stands with the terrorists against the aspirations of the Syrian people, as well as the peoples of the region and the entire world.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic calls for the condemnation of the massacre carried out by France, and calls on the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility to safeguard international peace and security by adopting punitive measures against the States and regimes that support and finance terrorism, particularly the regimes in Riyadh, Doha, Ankara and Paris. The Council should prevent them from continuing to support terrorism and endangering international peace and security, and compel them to implement fully Security Council resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015).

I should be grateful if the present letter could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative